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SUBJECT: MAHMOUD ZAHAR TO GET COLD RECEPTION IN AMMAN

Classified By: Ambassador David Hale, Reasons 1.4 (B) & (D)

1. (C) Foreign Minister al-Khatib informed the Ambassador on April 16 that he would receive his Palestinian counterpart, Mahmoud Zahar, on April 19, during the latter's regional swing. He said Zahar had a mixed delegation, with representatives of Nabil Shaath's office joining him. Khatib said he planned to be tough with Zahar. He would inform him this would be a one-time meeting if the Hamas-led government did not accept the basic principles laid out by the Arab League and by Jordan. In private and in public, Khatib plans to state that the aspirations of the Palestinian people can be met only through a return to the roadmap and the Arab peace plan, and by accepting that only peaceful means will advance Palestinian interests. He will publicly call on the Hamas-led government to endorse these points.

2. (C) No other government officials will receive the delegation; the King will be out of town and the Prime Minister has no intention to meet Zahar. (We can expect Zahar to have public meetings with Islamic Action Front/Muslim Brotherhood leaders, however.) The Foreign Minister confirmed that Jordan had no intention of receiving Khalid Meshaal. Ambassador repeated points made by A/S Welch in his recent meetings in Amman, stressing the need to avoid a situation in which Zahar is able to portray the impression that Jordan has endorsed his views or that Jordan's reception of him signals reduced pressure on the new Palestinian government. Khatib agreed and promised continued complete transparency on Jordan's approach to the Hamas government. He noted that given Jordan's demographics and geography, it could not ignore completely the new Palestinian government. If, as expected, Zahar fails to accept the points outlined by Khatib, there will be no point for further dialogue with him; in that case, Jordan will continue to focus its efforts on supporting President Abu Mazen and the institutions under his control.

3. (C) Comment: Any additional guidance should be passed soonest before the April 19 meeting.
HALE